The homesteads are arranged in roughly horse-shoe shape around an open space in which are tethered the sheep and cattle of the hamlet. Within this space is usually a very large hut (*luak*) used for animals in the rains and throughout the year as a guest-house and general village club. There is also usually a normal sized hut, with no surrounding fence, known as the *geu*, which is used as a dormitory by the unmarried men. In this hut are put the ashes of the cattle dung with which the young men cover themselves at night for warmth and protection from flies. Some villages have a tree in the central circle, but more often there is a complete and inhospitable absence of shade.

The homestead (*gol*) consists of two huts between which is an area enclosed by a fence of dura stalks or rough grass matting. The family group inhabiting the homestead is called also (presumably by transference) *gol*, and it is in this latter sense that the word *gol* will be used in this note.

In this sense *gol* is the smallest (though important) social unit in the tribe. An unmarried man does not own a homestead. All unmarried persons live in the homestead and adhere to the *gol* of their father. If their father is dead they adhere to the *gol* of their eldest married brother or, if they have none, to their deceased father's (married) brother. The owner of the homestead to which they adhere is the leader of their *gol*, and as such is responsible for the behaviour of its members. This vicarious responsibility on the part of the *gol* leader is a corollary to the principles of the ownership of cattle (and sheep). The cattle of the *gol* are owned and disposed of by the *gol* leader alone, and since the remedy for a wrong is a payment of cattle it follows that he and not the actual malefactor is held responsible. The position resembles that of the Roman family where the pater-familias alone is *sui juris*, all others being *alieni juris*. The Shilluk *filius familias*, however, becomes *sui-juris* on marriage which the Roman son did not. The vicarious responsibility of the *gol* leader has the convenient aspect that the *gol* leader is more easily found by the arm of the law than the actual malefactor because of the fact that he owns a homestead.